

From: JC
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/26/02 12:37am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

As an American citizen and an avid computer user I'd like to send my voice in regards to the Microsoft Vs DOJ Settlement.

We all know that Microsoft has abused its monopoly power to harm competitors and consumers. Judge Jackson & The Appeals Court have told us that. That's not in dispute here. It's what we need to do to prevent further abuse of power by Microsoft that we need to resolve.

What Mr. James and DOJ agreed to in the settlement is nothing but a "slap in the wrist". It does not open up competition, it leaves OEMs handcuffed and does not affect Microsoft's behavior in any way. What it does do is legalizes some of the business practices that Microsoft has been thought to be doing illegally.

Microsoft attacks competitors on several fronts. To kill off Netscape and RealPlayer they simply bundle their own competing products in Windows and stops OEM from bundling competing products. They refuse to offer a version of Windows without their own "middleware" programs. They use a different method to kill of competing Operating Systems. First they prevent OEMs from setting up dual-boot systems. Thus that effectively eliminated OS/2 and BeOs out of the market. Those two products were far superior to Windows but Microsoft flexed its antitrust muscle to knock them out.

What does Mr. James offer as a solution to this problem? He forces Microsoft to normalize Windows license prices. But the loophole is that Microsoft can punish OEMs by inflating the cost of Microsoft Office licenses or can simply refuse to license Windows. So that remedy has no effect. Next he opened up OEMs to bundling competing middleware applications. But Microsoft will not have offer a version of Windows without the apps bundled.

I guess that's enough of all this explanation, I'm sure you've heard everything already. As a computer user who has followed this case very carefully from the start and know all the ins and outs, I know this "deal" is a raw-deal for the consumers and competitors. Remember the DOJ has won this case in trial, there is really no reason to settle for a slap in the wrist now. You could've done that years ago.

Why waste the effort that was put into the case? Just my 10 cents.